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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 002965

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/03/2014

TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [YI](#) [SP](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN QUESTIONS EFFECTIVENESS OF REMOVING CAVEATS
IN KFOR

REF: STATE 162868

Classified By: KATHLEEN M. FITZPATRICK, POLITICAL COUNSELOR.
REASONS 1.4 (B) & (D)

Summary

1. (C) Spain is reviewing restrictions it may have placed on Spanish forces that are participating in KFOR but would prefer to help strengthen Kosovo police forces to improve KFOR's effectiveness, according to Kosovo specialists at the Spanish Foreign Ministry. Following the outbreak of violence in Kosovo in March, Spain is more likely to remain committed to KFOR in support of its overall policy to help maintain peace and security in Europe, according to MFA experts. End summary.

Removing national caveats

2. (C) We met with Enrique de Yturriaga, Special Assistant to the Director General of the Coordination Unit for Spain's Participation in the UNSC at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs August 2 to deliver reftel points on how to make KFOR more effective and urge Spain to remove national caveats on its KFOR forces. Yturriaga covers Europe, Africa, and non-proliferation issues in the UNSC and also has responsibilities for Kosovo issues in the MFA. He told us that he would have to review the issue of restrictions placed on Spanish forces in KFOR. Spain sees the proposal to remove national caveats as an ongoing dialog within NATO that may not affect Spain's participation in KFOR. Yturriaga explained that Spanish KFOR forces are engaged in rural areas where they carry out activities such as traffic control and reconstruction projects. They are less likely to be involved in the type of violence that occurred in March in urban areas like Mitrovica, Yturriaga stated. The Spanish position is that removing restrictions on Spanish KFOR or getting KFOR more involved in internal security matters in general may not be the best solution to improve KFOR's security preparedness.

Improving KFOR

3. (C) Poloff asked Yturriaga what types of measures Spain would propose to make KFOR more effective. Yturriaga responded that greater cooperation between KFOR, UNMIK and OSCE to strengthen the Kosovo police force would be a better way to prevent violence and make KFOR more effective over the long term. If KFOR becomes more involved in internal security matters, such as controlling domestic conflicts or protecting property, it may send a negative message that the KFOR was getting too involved in domestic matters or was giving special treatment to the Serb minority. Such a move would cast KFOR in a peacekeeping mode when the goal was to move toward peace building, Yturriaga said. Spain would be more willing to help improve how the Kosovo police force protects civilians rather than to pursue a domestic legal process to remove any national caveats that may exist on its forces in KFOR.

Spain's KFOR commitment

4. (C) Poloff asked Yturriaga how the new Spanish government planned to remain engaged in KFOR. Yturriaga replied that Spain's posture was to honor its international commitments and involve more civilian authorities rather than military forces in its international peace activities. However, following the violence that occurred in Mitrovica in March, Spain was unlikely to pursue a policy of replacing troops with civilian authorities in KFOR, Yturriaga stated.

5. (C) The Spanish Foreign Ministry had yet to formulate a policy position on Kosovo, according to Yturriaga. Foreign Minister Moratinos and State Secretary Bernardino Leon have only made general statements expressing Spain's commitment to increasing security and stability in Europe--including Kosovo--and is now more focused on its foreign policy efforts in the Middle East, Western Sahara, Afghanistan and Haiti.

Meanwhile, the Spanish Ministry of Defense is more involved in setting the pace of Spain's continued troop presence in KFOR.

Comment

[16](#). (C) We will continue to pursue dialogue on this issue with the GOS and NATO experts, most of whom have already departed on traditional summer leave. We suggest that the Department and/or US NATO also pursue this with their Spanish counterparts also. End comment.
MANZANARES